

FINDING THE BEAST IN UNKNOWN PLACES
When the Beast Comes to Your Church

In addition to the historical-prophetic applications of the beast symbol in Revelation, the beast is also an idol. Look closely at the Biblical data comparing the Lamb and the beast, and you will discover that the beast is an impersonator, a substitute and a counterfeit to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The Lamb	The Beast
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receives authority from God • Seven horns • Seven eyes • Accused of blasphemy • Was, is, and is to come • Ministers for 3 ½ years • Sustains the saints • Is slain • And resurrected • Gives freedom to followers • Worshipers of the Lamb rest • Sends Holy Spirit to lead people to worship the Lamb • Reproduces 'image of Christ' in followers • Seals followers in forehead • Has a bride - Jerusalem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receives authority from the dragon • Seven heads and ten horns • Ten crowns on head, • Has names of blasphemy • Was, is not, and yet is • Continues for 42 months • Persecutes the saints • Receives a deadly wound • Deadly wound is healed • Leads to captivity • Worshipers of beast have no rest • False prophet leads people to worship the beast • Reproduces 'image to beast' in followers • Marks followers in forehead or hand • Has a harlot - Babylon

When you compare the Lamb and the beast, ask yourself these questions:

<p>Why would anyone be attracted to a beast? Who receives worship? What are the methods of the beast? Who gives God the most glory? Who works the hardest?</p>	<p>Who is more approachable – a Lamb or a beast? Who demands worship? What are the methods of the Lamb? Who gives <u>self</u> the most glory? Who trusts God the most? Who wins – the Lamb or the beast?</p>
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The beast can also serve as a cartoon of your life when you try to do God's work for Him. What are the traits of the beast possibly present in your life today?

- Power, force, fear, threat, coercion, intimidation, manipulation, pride, self-exaltation, control, anger.
- Playing a victim.
- Playing god – without God.
- Salvation as a do-it-yourself project.

Salvation by our own works results in...

<p>Having to work hard. Competition with others. Destruction of fellowship No assurance of salvation – we never know if we have done enough!</p>	<p>Making a 'beast' in our own image – control of others. Disdain toward others. Discouragement Pride in our own works (Jesus does not get the glory!)</p>
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The beast is an impostor of the Lamb who seeks to destroy your identity so you will have significant doubts about who you are. Just as a computer virus can destroy the operating system of your computer, and just as a human virus can damage the body's immune system, likewise the 'virus' of the beast can destroy your spiritual immune system residing in your identity.

Satan's lie: What you do determines who you are!
God's truth: Who you are determines what you do!

The beast virus: The lies of Satan about you, about God, about others. All idolatry is rooted in lies about God. The anatomy of idolatry is as follows:

- You give in to discontent – the lusts of your heart.
- "Life would be better if only..." an expression of covetousness.

- You make an idol (in the thoughts of your mind) to do a better job than you think God is doing. You attempt to control your life through your idol, but the idol eventually controls you.
- You sacrifice others to your idol.
- You become just like your idol.

The Temptation in the Wilderness Satan attempts to Steal Jesus' Identity

- When Jesus was baptized, He heard God say, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22).
- Every temptation was a test of His God-given identity. "If you are the Son of God."
- Every temptation was packaged as something good.
- Every temptation appealed to establishing an identity by His own works rather than trusting in His God-given identity.
- The temptations appealed to self-gratification, self-enhancement, and self-preservation.
- In every temptation Jesus faced this test:
Believe Satan's lie: what you do determines who you are, or,
Believe God's truth: who you are determines what you do.

The Beast(s) in the Synagogue The Identity of Jesus – Challenged in Nazareth

- The people in Nazareth knew Jesus as the carpenter's son.
- Jesus announced His identity and His mission by reading from Isaiah 61:1,2.
- The people in Nazareth wanted miracles so they could believe who Jesus really was.
- Jesus confronted their idols, their misplaced identity.
- Their identity was not in God, but in "we are better than others" (identity by comparison).

The Clash of Identities – Idolatry vs. True Worship

What went wrong in Nazareth on that Sabbath day? What turned a congregation of worshipers into a frenzied, violent mob intent on murdering Jesus? Idolatry is to make a box and put yourself and your God inside that box and to worship that box by guarding it against all intruders.

Idolatry is the worship of a lesser god that in our minds becomes a greater god than the real Creator God. Idolatry distorts our thinking in that it gives us the illusion that we are doing God's work when in reality we are working for God like the devil.

You can always determine genuine worship from false worship by these tests:

- What kind of person do I become when someone challenges my idol?
- What kind of person do I become when things do not go my way? Do I act like the Lamb or like the beast?
- Do I ever use the methods of the Lamb to do the work of the beast?

"There can be no more conclusive evidence that we possess the spirit of Satan than the disposition to hurt and destroy those who do not appreciate our work, or who act contrary to our ideas." DA 487.

"Any man, be he minister or layman, who seeks to compel or control the reason of any other man, becomes an agent of Satan, and in the sight of the heavenly universe he bears the mark of Cain." Ms. 29, 1911

The Sabbath-keepers in the synagogue of Nazareth tried to kill Jesus because they doubted his identity, and Jesus in turn challenged their identity expressed in their idols.

Definition of Idolatry: When anyone or anything receives more glory than Jesus Christ.

Possible religious (good) idols:

- Past history (the good old days), church leaders.
- The church – its institutions, its organization.
- Doctrines as mere knowledge and information.
- Intellectualism.
- Exclusivism and parochialism.
- Salvation by our own works.
- Standards and behaviors.

The practical application of Jesus' sermon in Nazareth: "Your God is too small because your thinking about God is too narrow. Come outside your box and see where else God is working." Idols are always lesser gods, and when we worship such we become children of a lesser god.

The Cure for the Worship of the Beast is the genuine worship of the Lamb: "*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength, and honor and glory and blessing*" (Revelation 5:12)